Research on tear-free onion

788. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of any research going on to produce tear-free onions;

(b) whether any such research in countries like Japan and New Zealand has been successful;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any research in this matter is going on in the country; and

(e) the impact of any success in the research in the matter, over the market of onions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government is aware about the research being done to produce tear free onions. A collaborative research with the cooperation of Japan and New Zealand is being done to produce "tear-free onion".

(c) To develop tear-free onions, a gene-silencing technology, called RANi is used, which can shut down the lachrymatory factor synthase gene in onion responsible for tears.

(d) No research to produce "tear-free onion" has been initiated in the country.

(e) As the work is in the developmental stage, study of market potential does not arise.

Plan for development of agriculture

†789. SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that profession of agriculture has become non-profitale as a result of decline in its production in the country;

(b) whether Government has taken any measures to impove the present condition of agriculture; and

(c) if not, whether Government would formulate any effective plan for the development of agriculture by setting a target to increase the rate of production of agricultural products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Agriculture contributes nearly 18% of India's GDP with about 60% of the country's population dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. The progress in agriculture has enable the country to achieve food security. The foodgrains production was a record 217.28 million tonnes during the year 2006-07. There has been similar increase in the production of non-foodgrain crops as well as horticulture and plantation crops. However, the agricultural growth during the Ninth Plan and first three years of the Tenth Plan was below the targeted growth of 4% per annum, due to various factors and constraints, which adeversely affected the economic viability of farming. However, the agriculture sector has shown positive signs of revival during last two years of Tenth Plan.

Based on the Revised Draft National Policy for Farmers submitted by the National Commission on Farmers, Government of India has approved the National Policy for Farmers 2007. Various recomendations made by the Commission for rejuvenation of agriculture and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

allied sectors, as accepted by the Government, have been incorporated in the National Policy for Farmers. These include, *inter alia,* asset reforms in respect of land, water, livestock, fisheries and bio-resources; support services and inputs like application of frontier technologies for improving productivity in a sustainable manner; agricultural bio-security system; supply of good quality seeds and disease-free planting material, issue of soil health passbooks to the farmers, and integrated nutrient and pest management system etc.

In addition, for revitalization of agriculture sector, Government has launched two new Schemes namely, National Food Security Mission (NFSM) to improve production and productivity of foodgrains and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY) with an objective to incentivise the states so as to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sector and to provide flexibility and autonomy to states in the process of planning and executing agriculture and allied sector schemes. Besides, a number of initiatives, plan schemes and programmes including the initiatives/programmes announced in the Budget 2008-09 have been taken/initiated to address the problems faced by the farmers and for development of agriculture sector.

Progress of package and farmers to Vidarbha

790. SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTIRE be pleased to state the progress in implementation of the PM's package for farmers of Vidarbha and what are the expected and actual outcomes of the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): As against the target of Rs. 3873.26 crore fixed under the Prime Minister's Rehabilitation Package for farmers of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, Rs. 2046.71 crore has been released by various implementing agencies upto 31st January, 2008. Details of the progress in implementation of the PM's package for farmers of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra are as under:

(*Rs. in Crore*)

Identified Activities	Achievement as on 31.01.2008
Interest Waiver	824.98
Major and Medium Irrigation	486.62
Minor Irrigation	453.42
Seed Replacement	76.18
Check Dams	60.61
Watershed Development	8.01
Rainwater harvesting	0.62
Horticulture Development	48.01
Micro Irrigation	52.64
Extension Services	7.47
Subsidiary Income	25.15
Prime Minister's National Relief Fund	03.00
TOTAL:	2046.71